Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Researchers work to make sleeping safe

UTA Researchers create wireless carbon dioxide early detection system to combat SIDS

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ARLINGTON, TEXAS—

Dr. Hung Cao's job is dreaming up new ideas to better mankind—a few years ago his first son was born and while looking at child through the nursery window it was like a light bulb went off above his head.

"At that time there was nobody in the room and I did not see any monitoring system as well so suddenly the idea came up—how about we have some monitoring system to monitor these infants," Dr. Cao recalled.

He'd been evaluating gas sensors but then brainstormed with University of Texas at Arlington professor J.C. Chiao and that light
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A bulb moment became even brighter when they decided to develop a wireless sensor system to measure the amount of carbon dioxide being exhaled by sleeping babies.

The first version was large and unrefined but it worked. The device would alert parents for early intervention—even via a smartphone app—if their baby isn’t expelling carbon dioxide.

Professor Chiao said he wants students to come up with crazy ideas.

He thought this one was crazy good and practical.

"I thought well, this is a very good cause not only can we do research at the same time we can save a baby's life," Professor Chiao said with a smile. "If it happens to be the baby we save is the next president of the United States or Einstein then we've done our job."

Researchers have made the early prototype even smaller.

Heather Beardsley is a research engineer at the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center and is working to get the sensor from the workshop to store shelves.

"I think within the next year or so we will have a prototype built, a crib and an incubator built that we can take to a commercial company and attract their attention that they are willing to invest themselves in it," Dr. Beardsley said.

Engineers have received a $100,000.00 grant to speed up the process.

The sensor can be placed in a mobile—above and out of reach of the baby—or embedded in the crib.

Researchers want to make sure the technology is priced right for parents and hospitals.

After all, Dr. Cao is a parent—first and foremost.

"I came to know that for parents, baby is the most important thing in life," Dr. Cao said.

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